

House Bill 729

AN ACT TO CREATE NEW SECTION 37-143-6, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO ESTABLISH A MEDICAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO PROVIDE UP TO 20 NEW RECIPIENTS EACH YEAR WITH A FULL SCHOLARSHIP TO OBTAIN A MEDICAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT NO COST; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROGRAM SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROGRAM SHALL BE FUNDED FROM MONIES APPROPRIATED FROM THE HEALTH CARE EXPENDABLE FUND; TO PROVIDE THAT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS MUST AGREE TO PRACTICE FAMILY MEDICINE FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS IN AN AREA OF THE STATE THAT IS A CRITICAL NEEDS AREA FOR PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE; TO ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE THAT WILL ANNUALLY DETERMINE AND DESIGNATE THE CRITICAL NEEDS AREAS IN WHICH SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS MAY PRACTICE IN ORDER TO FULFILL THEIR CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION; TO PROVIDE THAT IF A SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT LEAVES MEDICAL SCHOOL OR HIS OR HER RESIDENCY BEFORE COMPLETION OR LEAVES PRACTICING FAMILY MEDICINE IN A CRITICAL NEEDS AREA BEFORE THE END OF TEN YEARS, THE FULL AMOUNT THAT THE RECIPIENT RECEIVED UNDER THE SCHOLARSHIP SHALL BE DUE AND PAYABLE WITHIN 90 DAYS, TOGETHER WITH INTEREST; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. The following shall be codified as Section 37-143-6, Mississippi Code of 1972:

37-143-6. (1) There is established a medical education scholarship program, which shall be administered by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. The program shall provide a certain number of eligible applicants each year with a full scholarship to obtain a medical education at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine at no cost to the recipient, if the recipient meets the conditions upon which the scholarship is granted.

(2) The program shall provide scholarships to up to twenty (20) new recipients each year, and the program shall be funded from monies appropriated from the Health Care Expendable Fund established under Section 43-13-407 and from any other funds appropriated to or otherwise made available to the board of trustees for that purpose. The amounts that may be expended annually for scholarships under the program shall not exceed the following: Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) in fiscal year 2001; One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000.00) in fiscal year 2002; One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,500,000.00) in fiscal year 2003; and Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) in fiscal year 2004 and in any later fiscal year.

(3) The scholarship shall be in an amount that will pay the full cost of attendance, as defined by federal law and regulation, at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine for the entire time necessary for the recipient to complete the requirements for a medical degree. The actual amount of the scholarship shall be determined by the Office of Financial Aid of the University of Mississippi Medical Center but shall not exceed Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) per year for any recipient.

(4) Before being granted a scholarship, each applicant shall enter into a contract with the board of trustees, which shall be deemed a contract with the State of Mississippi, agreeing to the terms and conditions upon which the scholarship will be granted. In order to receive a scholarship under the program, the recipient must agree in the contract to practice family medicine for a period of not less than ten (10) years after completion of his or her residency in an area of the state that is a critical needs area for primary medical care at the time of the recipient's entry into medical practice. The determination and designation of the areas of the state that are critical needs areas for primary medical care shall be made by a committee to be known as the Medical Care Critical Needs Committee, which shall be composed of the following persons: the Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs of the University of Mississippi Medical Center, who shall be chairman of the committee; the Executive Director of the State Department of Health; the Executive Director of the Division of Medicaid; the President of the Mississippi State Medical Association or his designee; the President of the Mississippi State Hospital Association or his designee; the President of the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians; and the Executive Director of the Mississippi Primary Health Care Association. The committee shall meet at least once annually to determine and designate the areas of the state that are critical needs areas for primary medical care in which scholarship recipients may practice family medicine in order to fulfill their contractual obligation.

(5) If a scholarship recipient leaves the University of Mississippi School of Medicine before graduation, or leaves his or her residency before completion, or fails to practice family medicine for a period of ten (10) years in a critical needs area for primary medical care as designated by the Medical Care Critical Needs Committee under subsection (4) of this section, the full amount that the recipient received under the scholarship shall be due and payable within ninety (90) days, together with interest. The amount of interest due shall be equal to the annual rate of return on the Health Care Trust Fund established under Section 43-13-405 for each year from the time the recipient received the scholarship money until the time the scholarship money is repaid. The board of trustees may bring suit against any scholarship recipient to recover the amount due to the state under this section for the recipient's failure to comply with the conditions upon which the scholarship was granted, as provided in this section and in the contract between the recipient and the board of trustees. The board of trustees is authorized to postpone or forgive the repayment of all or part of the amount that a recipient received under the scholarship and the interest that would otherwise be due under this subsection if the recipient's failure to comply with the conditions upon which the scholarship was granted was due to circumstances beyond the recipient's control that caused the recipient to be physically unable to comply with those conditions, such as suffering a severe illness, injury or other disabling condition.

(6) The board of trustees shall establish such rules and regulations as it deems necessary and proper to carry out the purposes and intent of this section.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2000.

Passed State Senate
April 5, 2000

Passed House of Representatives
April 19, 2000

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR